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FROM: ALEXANDER MARK, CHAIRMAN, NEWARK HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

As Chairman of the Newark Human Rights Commission, I would like to clarify a few points concerning the present controversy over a Police Advisory Board.

The statement which Daniel S. Anthony, director of the agency, and I issued to the press on February 28th did not even allude to police brutality. As a matter of fact, only one incident of alleged brutality has come to our attention in the past 7 months.

I am not accusing any Newark policeman of such tactics. In actuality, I am saying only one thing. If a representative cross-section of Newark's Negroes in 1958 felt they were not ~~always~~ getting fair treatment, and if 5 years later Negro leaders are promoting the formation of a neutral police advisory board, then there is no reason the Human Rights Commission should not consider these attitudes.

Our responsibility as provided by City Ordinance is to maintain harmonious relations between all the groups which comprise our cosmopolitan City. Since the Negro group in Newark is no longer a minority, but fast approaching an actual ethnic and racial majority, as compared to any other nationality group in the City, their thoughts and feelings must be carefully considered and evaluated by our Commission.

In this connection I felt that a police advisory board would give as much of an open forum for Newark's hard working police force as it would for any white or Negro citizen complainant. If I understand the Philadelphia story correctly, more police have been openly exonerated of false charges against them than have been referred by the Board for disciplinary action.

To be sure, our United States legal system is always the court of last resort, so no Advisory Board can impinge on the powers of the Court. The Board, as I see it, is an interim investigatory and advisory body which aids in guaranteeing constitutional rights in a fair and open hearing to some policemen and some citizens who may feel, for one reason or another, they have not had a fair shake.

I can see why police resist having this extra-legal board over their heads. Police work at best is a thankless task in any metropolitan center. Director Dominick Spina is doing an excellent job with an undermanned department. As chairman of the Newark Human Rights Commission, I congratulate him on his record for the first eight months. He is an alert and efficient leader of men. We shall continue to respect his judgment and his loyalty to his force, even though we shall maintain our right to disagree with him on the efficacy and objectivity of a Police Advisory Board.